

# For Lithuania, Few Allies in Moscow

By **BILL KELLER**

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**MOSCOW, Thursday, March 27** — After two weeks of battling with Moscow over the sovereignty of their tiny republic, the Lithuanians may or may not be independent, but one thing is clear: they are on their own.

At a time when they desperately need well-placed allies in Moscow, the Lithuanians have little support in the Soviet capital for their claim of statehood.

Even opposition groups that advocate full democracy and Western-style economics, as does Lithuania, are divided on the crisis, worried that Lithuania's secession was precipitous and may strengthen the hand of hardliners.

Members of the Soviet legislature said in interviews on Monday that Lithuania's support there was so thin that if President Mikhail S. Gorbachev decided to use force or impose a state of emergency — measures that few expected but no one ruled out entirely — Parliament would back him up. The interviews were conducted before the reports today of the arrests of Soviet Army deserters in Lithuania.

Politicians in Moscow said the Lithuanians themselves had alienated potential allies by their aloofness, their disregard for the fears of other ethnic groups, and their romantic, one-great-leap approach to independence.

## Moscow's Shrewd Propaganda

But Moscow has compounded the republic's political isolation by the shrewd use of propaganda to raise doubts about whether the independence government is really democratic.

Lithuanians have also been largely disappointed in their hopes of support from the outside world — especially from countries like the United States, which never officially accepted Lithuania's forcible incorporation into the Soviet Union.

Western nations and countries newly liberated from the Soviet bloc have called on Moscow to open a dialogue with Lithuania. But because they have been doubtful of the new government's durability and solicitous of Mr. Gorbachev, they have all stopped short of formally recognizing free Lithuania.

"There are three textbook conditions for recognition: territory, people and control," a Scandinavian diplomat said today. "The new Lithuanian government has the first two, but we cannot yet say that they have control."

## Georgians Rally in Support

The Lithuanians have heard muted promises of solidarity from independence campaigners in neighboring Estonia and Latvia, and Georgian separatists rallied in support of the new government in Lithuania on Saturday.

A few members of the Soviet Parliament, such as Yuri N. Afanasyev, a historian, and Yuri Y. Boldyrev, a Leningrad lawmaker, have called for recognition of the republic's proclamation of independence, made March 11.

But most legislators have been hos-

tile or lukewarm to the Lithuanian declaration, including members of the opposition Interregional Deputies Group, which has often been allied with members of Parliament from the Baltic republics in campaigning for greater democracy and economic pluralism.

When the Congress of People's Deputies voted March 15 to declare Lithuania's secession invalid, only 94 of the 1,557 legislators voting dissented. In Parliament on Monday, a day before reports of the seizure of Lithuanian deserters, legislators generally applauded Mr. Gorbachev's handling of the situation, including his decrees tightening security and demanding the surrender of private firearms.

Many who admire Lithuania's non-Communist government said they dis-

## Even Soviet opposition groups are wary of giving support.

approved of the tactics of separation, accomplished by an act of Parliament rather than a referendum.

The idea of representative democracy is still a novelty in this country, and many Soviet deputies consider anything short of a direct plebiscite undemocratic, although the Lithuanian Parliament was freely elected and voted unanimously for independence.

Other critics say the Lithuanians lost support by not showing greater concern for the members of the Russian and Polish minorities in their republics, many of whom worry about their place in an independent Lithuania.

"The Lithuanian freedom-lovers do not want to give first priority to human rights," said Nikolai N. Engver, a legislator of Latvian descent who represents a region of central Russia. He said he had repeatedly queried Lithuanians about plans to make Russians learn Lithuanian or to limit their citizenship rights, and had been given no satisfactory answers.

## Opposition Divided

The Lithuanian move has divided Soviet opposition groups like the Interregional Deputies Group. "A lot of deputies in the Interregional Group support Lithuania, but we don't support the form they picked to attain their independence," said Anatoly A. Sobchak, a Leningrad lawyer active in the opposition faction.

"They are creating opportunities for conservative forces that would like to say that the disintegration of the country must be stopped, that force must be used," he said.

Moscow political insurgents who met over the weekend to organize a protest on the issue next Saturday found that they were not unanimous on framing the rally as an endorsement of Lithua-

nian independence. Instead, they have billed their protest as a condemnation of Kremlin pressure tactics.

"If we are not united on the policy of Sajudis," said Galina Y. Kovalskaya of Moscow Tribune, one of the groups sponsoring the rally, referring to the Lithuanian pro-independence movement, "we are at least united against force and pressure. We all agree that there must not be tanks in Lithuania under any circumstances."

Several deputies said the Lithuanians hurt themselves by failing to practice the old art of legislative log-rolling.

"People ask, 'Where were the Lithuanians when our issue was debated?' " said an Armenian legislator who has championed self-determination for his own people.

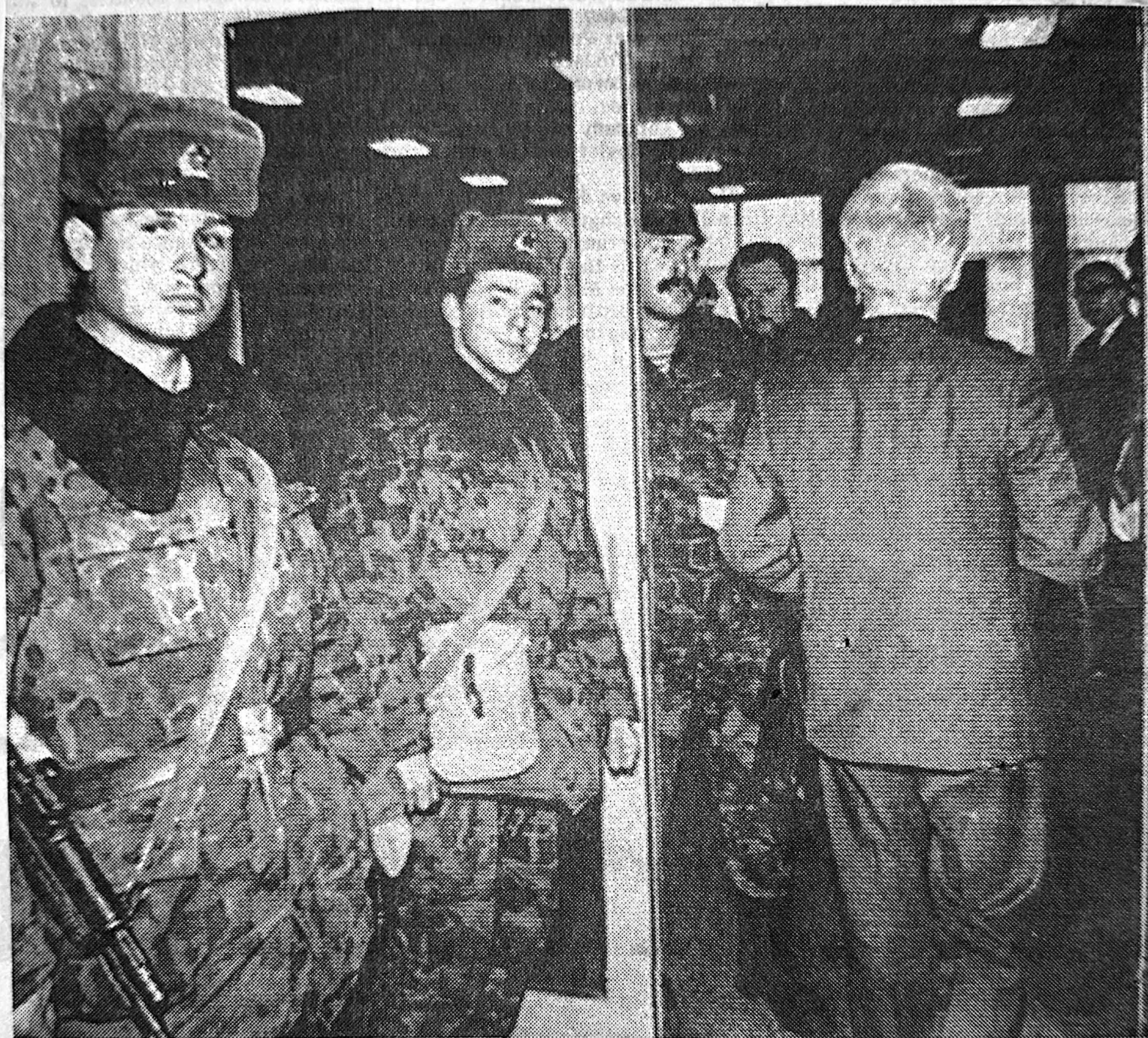
The Soviet authorities have also weakened sympathy for Lithuania with propaganda portraying the new Lithuanian leaders as reckless and undemocratic.

Roy A. Medvedev, a leading historian, said many of his fellow members of Parliament were shocked by reports, widely circulated in the Soviet press, that the Lithuanian government was on the verge of enacting a law providing a three-year prison term for activities against the new state.

Lithuanians have said that they are drafting a law outlawing attempts to overthrow the government by force, but that it will not restrict speech or political activities.

Mr. Gryazin, the Estonian deputy, conceded that the Baltic cause was hurt by the lack of support in Moscow, but he said most deputies from that region never counted on it.

"Everything we've gained until today, you've seen it yourself, has come through a very strong battle," he said.



Soviet soldiers yesterday continued their occupation of the Communist Party Higher School, the local seat of Leninism in Vilnius. Military helicopters de-

livered leaflets urging the city's pro-Moscow, Russian and Polish minorities to demonstrate outside Parliament against Lithuanian independence.

Reuters